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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the joint participation of P-12 schools and Georgia Southern University in preparing prospective teachers, revealing innovations that reflect cooperative development and administration of these endeavors. Georgia Southern University's College of Education developed and funded three roles for P-12 participants: site-based student teaching supervisors, clinical associates, and demonstration teachers. The site-based model has proven to be an efficient, cost-effective supervision approach. Feedback clearly suggests that university and P-12 participants have benefited. The clinical associate serves as a link between the university and the school. This role has become a significant bridge for communication and has positively contributed to the program and faculty development for the P-16 community. Demonstration teachers have many roles, including student teacher supervisor, mentor, curriculum developer, and collaborator with university faculty. Evaluation suggests that teachers find the program worthwhile and enjoyable and appreciate the opportunity to collaborate, work with student teachers, and stay abreast of new ideas. Some teachers noted areas for improvement, such as more contact with university faculty and more joint staff development. The three program components have set the stage for the development of a new cooperative program, Partner Schools. (SM)

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JOINT PARTICIPATION
BY
P-12 SCHOOLS AND GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
IN PREPARING TEACHERS

AACTE CONFERENCE

Risk Responsiveness Resiliency: Balancing Higher Education and PK-12 Capacity to Meet the Needs of Children

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JOINT PARTICIPATION

BY P-12 SCHOOLS

AND

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

The purpose of this paper is to clearly depict P-12 schools in joint participation with Georgia Southern University in preparing prospective teachers. It is further intended that the description will reveal innovations that reflect cooperative development and administration of these joint participation endeavors.

Collaboration has long been chronicled as a cornerstone in teacher preparation. The Joint Task Force on Student Learning offers a concise description of when collaboration occurs: "People collaborate when the job they face is too big, too urgent or requires too much knowledge for one person or group to do alone." From educators, resounding agreement could probably be reached on the demands that abound in teacher preparation efforts.

The act of effectively preparing prospective teachers is, indeed, a responsibility shared by universities and the P-12 sector. As collaboration increases between these two entities, it is likely that similar increases occur in the quality of those being prepared to teach. With this precept as a guiding principle, Georgia Southern's College of Education has established a clear, distinct practice of meaningfully engaging P-12 colleagues in teacher preparation activities. This practice has resulted in the development and funding of three roles for P-12 participants: Site-Based Student Teaching Supervisors, Clinical Associates, and Demonstration Teachers.

These roles initiate a significant message related to teacher preparation: P-12 colleagues participate *with* the university, rather than offering service *for* the university. This level of participation results when all categories of stakeholders participate in the decision-making process, as well as in the delivery of service.

The decade of the '90's has been the time for identifying, selecting, and implementing these roles. A range of participants has been involved in determining the roles; P-12 administrators and teachers, along with university administrators and faculty. Ensuing paragraphs describe the three identified roles.

Site Based Student Teacher Supervisor

This supervision format was implemented in 1990-91 and has been a part of the student teaching program since that time. Up to 25% of the student teaching population in a term has been served by this structure. In the model, all on-site supervision is conducted by the site-based supervisor. The university supervisor visits the school only at the invitation of the site-based supervisor or student teacher. Typically, the visit is a result of a persistent or significant problem.

Weekly communication (electronic, surface mail, or phone) occurs between the university supervisor, site-based supervisor, and student teacher. Additionally, the university supervisor conducts a minimum of five seminars per term for the site-based supervisors and a minimum of five seminars for student teachers.

Selection criteria and process are important. These follow.

1) Best practice teacher
2) Best practice supervisor
3) Expressed interest in independence, responsibility, and authority in student teaching
4) Considerable evidence of participation in the "team player" concept
5) Availability during and after the school day for meetings with the student teacher, other site-based supervisors, and the university supervisor
6) Completion of or in the process of completing TSS (Teacher Support Specialist) endorsement by Georgia's Professional Standards Commission

Selection Process

1) Recommendations for site-based candidates solicited from:
   A) principals
   B) site-based supervisors
   C) university supervisors
   D) clinical associates
2) Selection decision rendered in concert by principals, clinical associates, and university faculty

The site-based model has been reviewed positively by a variety of participants. Some of their comments follow.

From a Site-based Supervisor, "In this model, you are trusting me to do what I am trained to do. I feel more like a true member of the supervision team. My opinions are sought and respected. My interaction with peer site-based supervisors has challenged and encouraged me. In the seminars we learn as much from each other as we do from the university supervisor."

From a Student Teacher, "I am pleased to be in the site-based model. It seems appropriate that my supervising teacher has the level of authority that she does. After all, she is with me all day, day in and day out. She knows the big picture and is better able to offer suggestions. At first, I was disappointed that my university supervisor would not be coming into my room to observe. As it worked out, though, we had a lot of contact. Some was by mail, some on the phone, and then there were the seminars."

From a University Supervisor, "The site-based model requires a very different focus for my role. In the past, the student teacher has been the focus of my energies. I am beginning to see that an increased relationship with supervising teachers can be beneficial. The benefits will be realized by the student teacher with whom the supervising teacher is currently working, as well as those with whom that individual will work in the future."

In considering the quantitative evaluations, site-based supervisors and those in the traditional format were similar in their ratings of student teachers. From an over-all perspective, ratings of site-based supervisors seemed to be more discriminatory.

The site-based model is a long-term positive contributor to the student teaching program. However, caution should be exercised when considering whether or not to use this format. There can be a tendency to defer major responsibility to the P-12 supervisor. In some ways, this is a reality. However, the university accepts new and different responsibilities in mentoring student teachers and supervising teaches in this structure. In terms of time for the university supervisor, the site-based model can be more time-consuming than the traditional approach.

In summary, the site-based model has proven to be an efficient, cost-effective supervision approach. Feedback clearly suggests that the P-12 participants and those involved from the university have benefitted. The format is an excellent supervision option. However, it is not

suggested as the replacement for all existing models. Rather, it serves as an available option for student teaching supervision. The very nature of its structure requires extensive communication between university and field-based participants. This communication has proven to be a significant contributor in the development of collegial relationships and activities.

Clinical Associate

The role of Clinical Associate emphasizes the element of collaboration. The name for this role, as well as expected responsibilities, has changed over time. Originally, the role was referred to as Liaisons. Liaisons served as a link for the university and school.

Development of the role resulted from conversations between the College of Education and P-12 teachers and administrators who were involved in field experience supervision. Both parties agreed that there was need for an on-site person to represent the university. Up until this time, when questions arose from the school, attempts would be made to contact someone at this university. By the same token, if there were university-driven questions, attempts would be made to contact the principal. Contact in both directions was difficult. So, the initial and primary responsibility of the Liaison was to serve as a link or bridge for communication.

The first year in which this role was practiced was 1992. Liaisons were selected from three schools. Selected of schools was based on their level of participation in field experiences. From the original implementation of this role, communication between the school and university was significantly enhanced. For both parties, a name and number made contact a very accomplishable and efficient task.

Only a little time passed before Liaisons began assuming other responsibilities. When a problem surfaced with a preservice teacher, the Liaison's peer, serving as supervising teacher, often turned to the Liaison for information and support. Mentoring a peer supervisor, then, evolved as a natural responsibility for the Liaison to assume. Sometimes, in response to field experience difficulties, the Liaison would be called to observe and conference. As a result, the Liaison became a member of the supervision team for that particular preservice teacher. Their experience and knowledge base established them as viable candidates for committee membership and participation in the College of Education. Their views were valued when programmatic decisions were being discussed. A small step had been taken but a major change was underway.

Field experience service by the P-12 sector was clearly in transition from *for* the university to *with* the university. Collegiality was no longer an idea. Rather, it was becoming an expected practice.

Liaisons continued to hone their skills and make significant contributions in their schools and to Georgia Southern for three years. At the same time, there was a growing demand for field experiences in a number of schools. As a result, in 1995, five new schools were identified to be served by Liaisons. Following the naming of these new Liaisons, a review of responsibilities was conducted. At this point, it was apparent that these colleagues from the P-12 community had clearly exceeded the expectations of contact. It seemed appropriate to select a new title that was more descriptive of their role; Clinical Associate was chosen. In 1996, the number of Associates was increased to 10. In 1997, the number increased to 12, and, in 1998, there were 18 Clinical Associates. For 1999-2000 year, 26 Clinical Associates will be in service. What a level of confidence on the part of Georgia Southern! What a level of confidence on the part of the P-12 community! Collaboration seems to be at a zenith for GSU and our public school constituency. Without a doubt, Clinical Associates have played a vital role in this journey of trust, cooperation, and commitment. Collegiality has become an expected operational mode.

It is expected that a Clinical Associate's instruction is at the level of a master teacher. Considerable experience and success in preservice supervision is a prerequisite. TSS endorsement, while not a requirement, is a valued feature. Interpersonal skills that are conducive to mentoring are essential. Commitment to task without significant regard to the clock and calendar is a must; the job is very time-consuming.

The principal of the school and the College of Education department are the key ingredients in the selection of Clinical Associates. The Associate Dean for External Relations orchestrates the conversion. Ultimately, the decision is reached via a collegial process with ownership in the decision by all stakeholders.

As has been mentioned, responsibilities for Clinical Associates have evolved through the years. The list that follows identifies some of the primary ones but the list is not intended to be inclusive of each responsibility or need that may surface.

1. In concert with building principals, identify supervising teachers to serve as

mentors for preservice teachers.

2. Serve as mentor for all supervising teachers in their school.
3. Offer an orientation for all preservice teachers who are hosted by the school.
4. Depending on circumstance and need, the Associate may become an instructional observer for preservice teachers.
5. If a problem develops with a preservice teacher's field experience, the Associate becomes a member of the supervision team.
6. Provide the Office of School and Community Relations demographic data on supervising teachers; these data initiate the funding process for supervising teachers.
7. Interact with university faculty on field experiences and other programmatic considerations.
8. Serve on university level committees.
9. Serve as field experience informants in professional organization settings.
10. Serve as field experience communication link for investigative bodies such as NCATE.
11. Participate as resource persons in graduate and undergraduate classes.
12. Participate in probationary and termination meetings for unsuccessful field experiences.
13. Coordinate Demonstration Teacher activities for the school.
14. As experience is gained, mentor colleagues new to the role of Clinical Associate.

Clinical Associates receive an annual stipend that is within the range of $750 - $1200. The $1200 amount is for the more experienced Associates serving in schools of high impact by preservice students. Payments are made at the end of each semester by Georgia Southern of the Associate's school system. The system, then, incorporates the funds into the Associate's next monthly check.

Each summer, a designated time is determined for Clinical Associate orientation. During

each semester, the Associate Dean meets with each Clinical Associate. This may be an individual meeting, a meeting with Associates from similar grade levels, or it may be with the total cadre of Associates. In addition to meeting with the Associate Dean, departments and programs usually have meetings each semester for Clinical Associates. These meetings are crucial for information updates, for training, as well as for valued professional interaction.

The role of Clinical Associates was derived as a result of needed service. In many ways, the service component has been resoundingly met and surpassed. Beyond the service component, though, this role has served as a significant bridge for communication which has very positively contributed to program and faculty development for our P-16 community.

Demonstration Teachers

The third category of field experience collaboration is Demonstration Teachers. This role was developed with the intent of significantly extending participation by the P-12 community in teacher preparation activities. An equally important companion factor was the interest of increasing university participation in P-12 settings. As presented to the faculty in the College of Education and surrounding schools, the idea of Demonstration Teachers was enthusiastically endorsed. With continued conversation, parameters for the concept expanded and captured the attention of the entire P-16 community.

During fall 1997, a Demonstration Teacher Task Force was established to consider the possibility of establishing a Demonstration Teacher program. The charge for the Task Force was to ascertain qualifications, application process, responsibilities, and selection procedures. Composition of the Task Force clearly reflected contribution equality for stakeholders. The twelve member committee was composed of six university faculty and six educators from P-12. From the Task Force it was determined that Demonstration Teachers must (1) possess clear evidence of service as an exemplary teacher and (b) possess evidence of strength to serve in one or more of the identified role responsibilities. A range of responsibilities exists. Demonstration Teachers fulfill responsibilities in one or more of the areas that follow:

- supervisor of preservice teachers
- mentor for new teacher induction
- participant in Georgia Southern University (GSU) curriculum development

- participant in GSU course instruction as teacher or resource person
- GSU committee membership (example: faculty search committee)
- collaborator with GSU faculty in research
- training leader for demonstration teacher preparation activities

The next step was to determine a funding target and pursue it with vigor. In the fall of 1997, the Dean of the College of Education contacted the Vice President for Academic Affairs and requested funding for the Demonstration Teacher concept. The request was for $175,000 for the 1998-99 academic year and for $250,000 for each ensuing year. In the days of budget restraints, this represents quite a bold appeal.

Funding for the proposal was granted at the requested level. The application and selection process followed. The idea was now in a position to become practice, the opportunity seemed to be exceptional.

A Demonstration Teacher Review Committee was formed. Again, equality of representation was evident, six members were from the University and six from P-12. Co-chairs of this significant committee were from the P-12 sector.

A lot of excitement and appreciation surrounded this prospect of a new program. Of the two hundred sixty nine (269) applicants, one hundred seventy-five (175) teachers, from forty-four different schools, were selected to participate in the initial year of the program's operation. These teachers may receive an honorarium of $500 per semester for participation as a Demonstration Teacher. A Coordinator for P-16 activities and the Demonstration Teacher Program was named. The program was operationalized and a full year of service was realized.

A survey of the P-16 membership was conducted at year's end to ascertain effectiveness of the program, as well as to learn of suggestions. Responding faculty represented all four of the College of Education departments. The majority reported that their participation related to the selection and direct supervision of Demonstration Teachers. Other responses included involvement in coordinating placements, making recommendations, and attending meetings related to the Demonstration Teacher program. When asked to identify positive aspects of the program, faculty most often reported the development of a highly positive relationship between the schools and the university. Faculty observed that such a "partnership" was characterized by a

genuine sense of participation and that the Demonstration Teachers were quite committed.

Faculty were also requested to report ways in which the Demonstration Teacher program could be improved. While responses were quite varied, several faculty stated that the application and the selection criteria and selection process need to be defensibly constructed and clearly understood. Other responses included having students evaluate Demonstration Teachers.

Only a minority of faculty offered other comments that pertained to the Demonstration Teacher program. Those included expanding the program, having greater Demonstration Teachers involvement with the university, and reporting that the program is a solid professional development idea.

Demonstration Teachers responded to a survey about the program: 46% were elementary teachers, 21% were middle school teachers, 30% were high school teachers, and 3% indicated that they taught at both the middle and high school levels. Math, science, reading, language arts, and social science were the stated content areas of most of these teachers.

By far, the most frequent Demonstration Teacher program activities involved the supervision of student teachers and preprofessional block students. Teachers also reported being involved in methods courses and practicum. Other activities included guest speaking, attending committee meetings, participating in surveys, and attending the Demonstration Teacher Summer Retreat.

Many positive aspects of the program were listed. Most often, teachers reported that working with GSU students, collaborating with classroom teachers and COE faculty, and staying abreast of new ideas were constructive activities. Being able to work with students was listed among other positive features.

Areas for improvement centered around interaction among those involved in the program. Some teachers expressed a need for more contact with GSU faculty, more joint staff development, and to expand activities to include all Demonstration Teachers. Teachers also reported that there needs to be more work with schools to determine teacher schedules and increase the time students spend in the classroom.

Other comments provided by the Demonstration Teachers were predominantly positive in describing the program as a worthwhile and enjoyable experience. Many teachers indicated an

appreciation for the program and were quite satisfied with the opportunities to work with a variety of teaching professionals.

Support of the program has been exceptional. A cameo of this experience was developed by one of the Demonstration Teachers. The article was included in *P-16 in Action, Volume 1, No. 1, pages 16-17.* A concluding statement in the article summarized the impact of this fledgling, innovative program. The author, Joyce Jamerson of Screven County High School, writes "Clearly, Georgia Southern University is committed to the P-16 initiative through the establishment and support of these innovative programs. Of equal importance is the significant participation of the P-12 community in this endeavor. The resulting partnership will be a catalyst for very positive outcomes for students in the P-12 sector, as well as for teacher preparation."

These three programs (Site-based student teaching supervisors, clinical associates, and demonstration teachers) have served teacher preparation in creative, productive ways. Additionally, they have effectively set the stage for the development of a new cooperative program, Partner Schools. A Partner School/Demonstration Teacher Council has been formed. This body is currently working to develop Partner School opportunities.

The programs that have been developed, as well as the newest proposed program, reflect efforts to more effectively serve the P-16 community. In reality, the task is a journey, rather than a destination. The travel has clearly depicted keen interest on the part of P-12 educators and of university faculty to engage in activity that will meaningfully impact educational opportunities in southeast Georgia.